



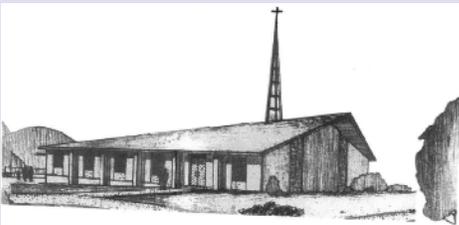
# THE MESSENGER

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

September 2021

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- Sunday Worship - 8:30 & 10:30 AM
- Sunday School - 9:30 AM
- NA Meeting - Wednesdays at 7:30 PM
- Spirituality Group - Thursdays
- AA Meeting - Saturdays at 10:00 AM
- Soccer Shots - Saturday mornings & Tuesday evenings (*Spring-Fall*)



## 2021 Ascension Church COUNCIL

### Council Executives

- Jason Eager *president*
- Jeff Williams *vice-president*
- Clay Marnich *secretary*
- John Bielewicz *treasurer*

### Council Liaisons

- Jerry Wessel *Christian Education*
- John Bielewicz *Youth*
- Jason Eager *Communications & Publications*
- Rudy Marnich *Social Ministry & Evangelism*
- Bob Thompson *Finance & Stewardship*
- Barbara Thompson *Worship & Music*
- Mark Thompson *Property*
- Jeff Williams *Mutual Ministry*
- Clay Marnich *Personnel*
- (Vacant) *Fellowship*

### Next Council Meeting

**Tuesday September 14 at 7:00 PM**

## Merging Two Legacies



*From Pastor Murdy's Desk*

*My Dear Friends in Christ,*

Later this month our church will make one of its biggest decisions to date, and that is to merge with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and begin overseeing the ministry of Mt. Calvary Cemetery. I could not be more thrilled and excited at the possibilities of what God is doing amongst us. Every church has been called to work in mission for the sake of the gospel and the expansion of the message of Christ.

As Lutherans, we have a unique role to play, especially because of where we are

located. When I first arrived at Ascension almost 10 years ago, one of the things I noticed was that there are not many Lutheran churches around. Sure, there were a few, but what was apparent were the struggles which they were facing and their somewhat resistant attitude in working together towards the same goal. Ten years ago, the Lutheran church was in a different place. We all have witnessed and experienced the ebb and flow of attendance, the excitement, the restful periods. We have said goodbye to a lot of people and have welcomed dozens more. The church has changed and so have we.

My excitement and my joy come at the opportunity of working together. I believe that merging with the congregation of Good Shepherd will bring new possibilities, insights and ideas. When we combine the legacies of both congregations, I believe that the momentum of our collaborative efforts and faith will propel our congregation into the future.

*continued on page 2*

# Celebrating St. Hildegard of Bingen Commemorated Sept 17

Hildegard lived virtually her entire life in convents, yet was widely influential within the church. After an uneventful time as a nun, she was chosen as abbess of her community. She reformed her community as well as other convents. Around the same time, she began having visions and compiled them, as instructed, in a book she called "Scivias." Hildegard's importance went beyond mysticism. She advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. ([www.sundaysandseasons.com](http://www.sundaysandseasons.com))



## Hildegard of Bingen

Abbess, artist, author, musician, composer, mystic, pharmacist, poet, preacher, theologian — where to begin in describing this remarkable woman?

Born into a noble family, Hildegard was instructed for ten years by the holy woman Blessed Jutta. When Hildegard was 18, she became a Benedictine nun at the Monastery of Saint Disibodenberg. Ordered by her confessor to write down the visions that she had received since the age of three, Hildegard took ten years to write her *Scivias* (*Know the Ways*). Pope Eugene III read it, and in 1147, encouraged her to continue writing. Her *Book of the Merits of Life* and *Book of Divine Works* followed. She wrote over 300 letters to people who sought her advice; she also composed short works on medicine and physiology, and sought advice from contemporaries such as Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.

Hildegard's visions caused her to see humans as "living sparks" of God's love, coming from God as daylight comes from the sun. Sin destroyed the original harmony of creation; Christ's redeeming death and resurrection opened up new possibilities.

*Continued on page 5*

From Pastor Murdy's Desk (continued from pg 1)

As we continue to discern our potential merger with Good Shepherd, I would ask you to consider a few questions: How is the Holy Spirit at work in this mutual conversation? What role can I play as we take steps toward a new identity? What does this mean for the Lutheran Church in the West Hills of Pittsburgh? What might God be calling Ascension to do in the next few years?

As the October newsletter will follow our congregation's decision, I want to take a moment to offer my gratitude. I am grateful for each of you and your willingness to explore this opportunity and for asking questions along the way. I hope you will continue to ask questions as that can only add strength to the conversation. I also want to offer my thanks to our council leaders. They have been responsible, inquisitive and gracious. On behalf of our council, I offer our collective gratitude to Kelly Bryan and the leadership of Good Shepherd. They have been a constant source of direction and insight. So much work has gone into these conversations and I am grateful for you all.

Prayerfully yours +

Pastor Joseph Murdy

“The CHURCH has  
changed  
And so have  
WE.”

~ PJ

# LESSER FESTIVALS & commemorations

## September 2

**Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, bishop, renewer of the church, died 1872**

Grundtvig was, with Søren Kierkegaard, one of the two great Danish theologians of the nineteenth century. As a pastor, he battled the prevalent idea that Christianity was more a philosophy than divine revelation. He wrote over a thousand hymns.

## September 9

**Peter Claver, priest, missionary to Colombia, died 1654**

Born into Spanish nobility, Claver became a Jesuit missionary, and served in present-day Colombia. His ministry was focused on the slaves that arrived there. He gave them food and medicine, learned their dialects, and taught them Christianity.

## September 13

**John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, died 407**

John was a priest in Antioch and an outstanding preacher. His eloquence earned him the nickname “Chrysostom” (“golden mouth”), but it also got him into trouble. As bishop of Constantinople he preached against corruption among the royal court. The empress, who had been his supporter, sent him into exile. His preaching style emphasized the literal meaning of scripture and its practical application.

## September 14

**Holy Cross Day**

Helena, the mother of Constantine, made a pilgrimage to Israel to look for Christian holy sites. She found what she believed were the sites of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus, sites that modern archaeologists believe may be correct. Here Constantine built two churches. The celebration of Holy Cross Day originated with the dedication of the Church of the Resurrection in 335. Today the festival provides the church an opportunity to lift up the victory of the cross with a spirit of celebration that might be less suitable on Good Friday.

## September 16

**Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, died around 258**

Cyprian worked for the unity of the church and cared for his flock in North Africa during a time of great persecution. During Cyprian’s time as bishop many people had denied the faith under duress. In contrast to some who held the belief that the church should not receive these people back, Cyprian believed they should be welcomed into full communion after a period of penance. He insisted on the need for compassion in order to preserve the unity of the church. His essay *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* stressed the role of bishops in guaranteeing the visible, concrete unity of the church. Cyprian was also concerned for the physical well-being of the people under his care. He organized a program of medical care for the sick during a severe epidemic in Carthage.

## September 17

**Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, died 1179**

*See feature about Hildegard of Bingen on page 2 of this issue.*

## September 18

**Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society, died 1961**

Dag Hammarskjöld (HAH-mar-sheld) was a Swedish diplomat and humanitarian who served as secretary general of the United Nations. He was killed in a plane crash on this day in 1961, in what is now Zambia, while on his way to negotiate a cease-fire between the United Nations and the Katanga forces. For years Hammarskjöld had kept a private journal, and it was not until that journal was published as *Markings* that the depth of his Christian faith was known. The book revealed that his life was a combination of diplomatic service and personal spirituality, and of contemplation on the meaning of Christ in his life and action in the world.

## September 21

**Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist**

Matthew (“Levi” in the gospels of Mark and Luke) was a tax collector for the Roman government in Capernaum. Tax collectors were distrusted because they were dishonest and worked as agents for a foreign ruler, the occupying Romans. In the gospels, tax collectors are mentioned as sinful and despised outcasts, but it was these outcasts to whom Jesus showed his love. Matthew’s name means “gift of the Lord.” Since the second century, tradition has attributed the first gospel to him.

## September 29

**Michael and All Angels**

On this festival day the church ponders the richness and variety of God’s created order and the limits of human knowledge of it. The scriptures speak of angels (the word means “messengers”) who worship God in heaven, and in both testaments angels speak for God on earth. They are remembered most vividly as they appear to the shepherds and announce the birth of the Savior. Michael is an angel whose name appears in Daniel as the heavenly being who leads the faithful dead to God’s throne on the day of resurrection. In Revelation, Michael fights in a cosmic battle against Satan.

## September 30

**Jerome, translator, teacher, died 420**

Jerome was a biblical scholar and translator, but rather than translating the original Hebrew and Greek scriptures into classical Latin, he worked in the commonly-spoken Latin of the day, creating a version called the Vulgate. Thanks to the work of Jerome, many people received the word in their own language and lived lives of faith and service to those in need.

# BEST WISHES . . .

## SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Date | Member/Friend

- 1 Bryce Rose  
Deb Walenchock
- 4 Jen Marnich
- 5 Angel Rose  
Lynn Neilson
- 6 Carmen Filloy  
Carolyn Paladino
- 7 Curtis Woods
- 10 Mary Honath
- 11 George Murdy
- 12 Luciana Thompson
- 14 Arianne Marnich  
Brielle Marnich
- 17 Lauren Rose
- 18 Jean Murdy
- 23 Gavin Thomson
- 30 Blake Rhoads



## SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES!

Date | Members/Friends

- 6 Pastor Joe & Amanda Murdy  
Mary Jane & John McGinnis  
Chris & Emily Paladino
- 10 Paul & Paula Tomchak
- 17 Amy & Tom Lanzarotta
- 19 Rick & Janey Zoltun
- 21 Mark & Barbara Thompson
- 28 Mike & Lynn Kinney



9/11/2001  
**PATRIOT DAY**

— WE WILL NEVER FORGET —

**20th ANNIVERSARY**



**HAPPY GRANDPARENT'S DAY!**



Sunday September 12, 2021

## LECTOR SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 2021



**SEPTEMBER 5**

Mary Thompson

**SEPTEMBER 12**

Mark Thompson

**SEPTEMBER 19**

Kelly Braun

**SEPTEMBER 26**

Venus Thompson

Pastor Joe will email the lessons to each lector at least one week before the scheduled reading date. Lessons are found in the the RED hymnal - page 43, Year B.

# go <sup>e</sup> NEWS?

If you have pictures, articles, or ideas to submit for the **OCTOBER** Newsletter, please contact the office or Pastor, or email [office@alcpgh.com](mailto:office@alcpgh.com).

Virtuous living reduces the estrangement from God and others that sin causes.

Like all mystics, Hildegard saw the harmony of God's creation and the place of women and men in that. This unity was not apparent to many of her contemporaries.

Hildegard was no stranger to controversy. The monks near her original foundation protested vigorously when she moved her monastery to Bingen, overlooking the Rhine River. She confronted Emperor Frederick Barbarossa for supporting at least three antipopes. Hildegard challenged the Cathars, who rejected the Catholic Church claiming to follow a more pure Christianity.

Between 1152 and 1162, Hildegard often preached in the Rhineland. Her monastery was placed under interdict because she had permitted the burial of a young man who had been excommunicated. She insisted that he had been reconciled with the Church and had received its sacraments before dying. Hildegard protested bitterly when the local bishop forbade the celebration of or reception of the Eucharist at the Bingen monastery, a sanction that was lifted only a few months before her death.

In 2012, Hildegard was canonized and named a Doctor of the Church by Pope Benedict XVI. Her liturgical feast is celebrated on September 17.

Source: [www.franciscanmedia.org](http://www.franciscanmedia.org)



More information about the fascinating life of Hildegard von Bingen also may be found at <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/med/hildegard.asp> "The Life and Works of Hildegard von Bingen" (1098-1179)

## ALC Council Meeting Highlights

Council meeting was held Tuesday Aug 10, 2021

### **August Council Highlights:**

- Minutes of July council meeting accepted as amended
- Audit was conducted on July 19<sup>th</sup> and submitted to synod.
- Motion to include two paid vacation Sundays as part of music director's package. Details to be included in renewed job description. All in favor.
- Council discussed Covid policy and decided it should remain unchanged. As a reminder that policy is: If you are vaccinated you do not have to wear a mask while indoors. If you are unvaccinated, feeling unwell, or if you have health concerns you are strongly encouraged to wear a mask.
- Motion to approve merger document dated 10 Aug 2021 with "up to" amendment to paragraph 4. All in favor.
- Due Diligence Requests. Only a few outstanding items. Since this meeting most of those items have been added.
- Motion to accept bylaws as amended - draft August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - approved by synod CCBL committee. Approved.
- *Special council meeting called by President for August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 11:30am to review due diligence. Review Synod comments to bylaws and vote on setting congregation meeting date.*

### **August 22<sup>nd</sup> special council meeting**

- Council checked in with regards to items collected for Due Diligence, as well as the approved Merger agreement and Bylaw revisions. Nothing to add and everyone present felt it was time to call the congregational meeting.
- Council voted to call a congregational meeting on Sunday, September 26<sup>th</sup> after worship, at 11:30. This meeting will be to vote on our merger agreement document and the revisions made to our bylaws.

### **Next Council Meeting**

Tuesday, September 14 at 7:00 pm



Following worship on Sunday Sept. 12, please join in the festivity of

## **RALLY DAY PICNIC 2021!**

Church will provide main-dish meat. All are invited to bring a covered dish item to share. See you there!

## **BUILDING & MAINTENANCE PROJECTS HELP NEEDED!**

### **Restroom Renovations**

ALC's "Bathroom renovation" continues! Men's Room nears completion; partitions to come. Women's room remodeling is underway - Drywall has been installed; painting is next, followed by new fixtures, tile and partitions! Thanks to all who have pitched in to help, and to all who have contributed to this effort through their monetary support.

### **CHURCH & ROAD CLEAN-UP!**

Saturday September 11 is the day to lend a hand or two to help with the beautification of the roadways, parking lot, and all exterior areas surrounding the church! BOTH September 11 AND 18 are set aside for working indoors to do a thorough Fall clean-up.

*See page 7 for more info.*

**Please let Bob Thompson know ASAP if you're willing & available to help with our beautification and maintenance projects.**

**Phone 412-389-1869**

**Email [Bob.thompson72@outlook.com](mailto:Bob.thompson72@outlook.com)**



*A monthly gathering of members and friends of Ascension Church*

### **Join the Lunch Bunch on their next adventure Thursday September 16: "Lunch Bunch Plays a Hunch"**

On August 19<sup>th</sup> fifteen Lunch Bunchers met at Dee Jay's outside of Weirton, West Virginia to chow down. There actually were no Dee Jays (as in disc jockeys), so the only platters being spun had barbequed ribs on them - but all of the food was great, as were the conversations.

On **Thursday September 16**, the Bunch plans to try a new venue - Pomodoro at 2572 Brandt Road in Wexford. Only George Kasich Jr. has been to that establishment, but since he is a bona fide food critic, the other Bunchers who were present in Weirton had a hunch that it would be at least four stars, so we are giving it a try. Their specialties are Italian dishes, but you could check the menu online if you so desire to find something other than Italian.

Getting to Pomodoro is an easy trip north up I-79 to the Wexford exit, unless the bridge over the Ohio River and Neville Island is still being worked on, in which case it might be a pretty frustrating drive, but George says it will be well worth the trip.

Those carpooling can meet at the church at 10:45 AM, and those who would rather go straight there should plan to arrive by 11:30 AM. In either case, all planning to attend need to let Jerry Wessel (412-787-1213) or Nancy Schreiber (412-859-3969) know by Tuesday afternoon Sept. 14 so that reservations can be made. As always, everyone is welcome to "bunch up" with us for a good lunch.

*~ Jerry Wessel*

# happy LABOR DAY Sept. 6, 2021

# What time is it? CLEAN-UP TIME!



Ascension's 2017 Clean-Up Crew got the job done with a smile.

## Yes, it's CLEAN-UP time!

2020 wasn't the best year for spring and fall cleanups.

With that said, there is much yet to be done in '21!

Thus, in keeping with the spirit and intent of "God's Work. Our Hands" Sunday (which officially is observed on Sept.12), we have scheduled two

Saturdays for two opportunities to help:

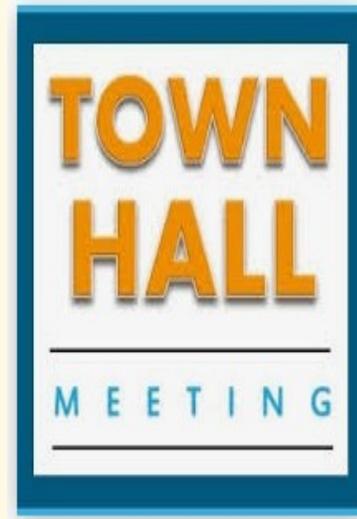
**Sept. 11 and Sept. 18, from 9 am to noon.**

**September 11** will be our "Road Clean-Up" day from 10 to 12, so perhaps if you consider yourself more able to help outdoors, this is *the* opportunity for you. Index cards will be available on-site with job requests on them, but if the scheduled dates don't work for you, then these helpful tasks can always be done at your convenience.

**September 11 & 18** will be our indoors cleanup days. Many areas inside need and deserve some TLC and "elbow grease" to both organize and spruce up our beloved spiritual home!

If you are able to help, please sign up at church or contact

Mark Thompson at [mjthompson936@gmail.com](mailto:mjthompson936@gmail.com).



A "Town Hall" meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, September 19** following worship.

This will be a great opportunity for anyone to ask questions prior to the Sept. 26 Congregational Meeting vote.



CONGREGATIONAL  
MEETING

**Sunday, September 26**

**11:30 am** (following worship)

After their meeting on August 22 to review documents related to the proposed merger with Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Ascension Council felt that it was time to call a Congregational Meeting with the purpose of voting on the merger with Good Shepherd (congregational approval of our merger agreement) and the revisions made to our by-laws.

*A binder with the due diligence items is available in the narthex if you wish to see or review any of those documents.*

**Please make your best effort to be present for these important decisions in the life of Ascension Church!**



*To be Christ's Disciples,  
nurture our faith, serve God,  
welcome our neighbors,  
and joyfully share in His love.*

**Contact Us**

(412) 859-3711

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McKees Rocks, PA 15136**

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

